THE WORD OF THE LORD : TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS At the Liturgy at Nine Thirty

THE SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Preparation for Christmas continues with readings that kindle hope for the future reign of God in all the world, a reign of justice and righteousness. The Old Testament reading is one of the classic announcements of a future king in the line of David, one who will inaugurate a rule of peace with justice, especially for the poor. Psalm 72, a petition to God that the king rule with righteousness and justice, continues the same themes. A major motif in the Epistle lection, which cites Isaiah 11.10, is hope, based on the confirmation of the Old Testament promises by the coming of Jesus. The apocalyptic dimensions of the season are dramatized in the Gospel, the account of the appearance of John the Baptist with his announcement of the kingdom of God.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Presider: Almighty God, who sent your servant John the Baptist to prepare your people to welcome the Messiah, inspire us, the ministers and stewards of your truth, to turn our disobedient hearts to you, that when the Christ shall come again to be our judge, we may stand with confidence before his glory; who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

People: Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 11.1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will

not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The word of the Lord *R*/. Thanks be to God

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: 72.1-7, 18-19



Give the king your justice, O God, and your righteousness to the King's son; that he may rule your people righteously, and the poor with justice; that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, and the little hills bring righteousness. He shall defend the needy among the people, he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor. *R*/.

He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another. He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth. In his time shall righteousness flourish; there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more. R/.

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous deeds! And blessed be his glorious name for ever! and may all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen. R/.

SECOND READING: Romans 15.4-13

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the

truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord *R/. Thanks be to God*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Luke 3.4,6

Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. All flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 3.1-12 *R/. Glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the

Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The Gospel of Christ *R/. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Presider: God our strength, we are nothing without you. Receive all we offer you this day as you sustain us with your mercy; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Presider: Faithful God, we thank you for feeding us with this heavenly banquet. Help us always to hear the prophet's call to turn our hearts to you; in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

People: Amen

